

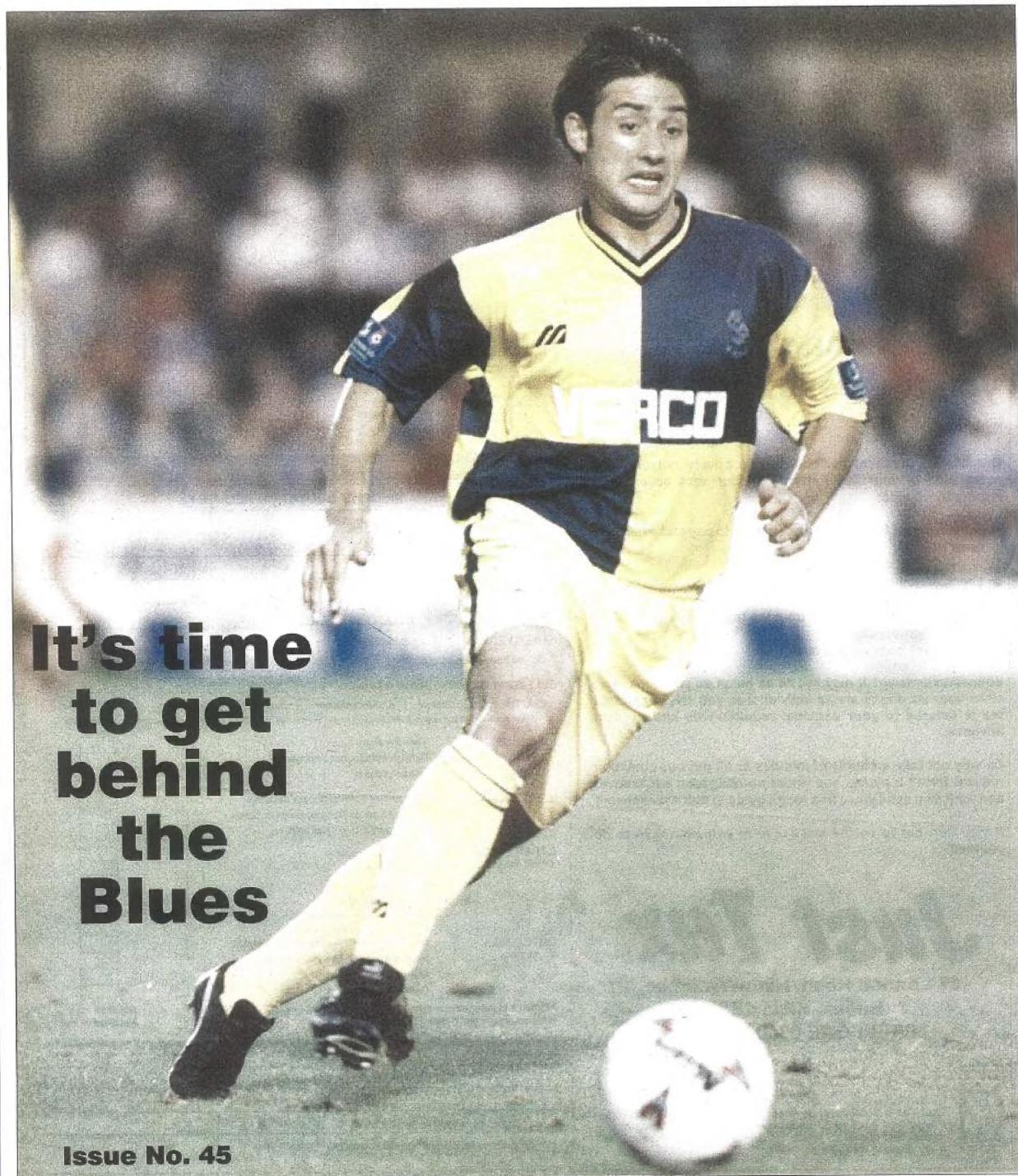


The **BLUES NEWS**

The official newspaper of Wycombe Wanderers Football Club

**It's time
to get
behind
the
Blues**

Issue No. 45



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THE BLUES NEWS

3

Carry on cheering, we need the support



Big support: Blues fans cheering on the Blues at Watford

TOMORROW we face Burnley away at Turf Moor in a crucial Division Two match for both sides.

With Burnley having spent in the early part of the season it will be no easy task to defeat Chris Waddle's side, as too date they have not lost at home in Division Two.

Their previous home match against their local rivals Preston North End, saw a crowd just under 14,000 see Burnley score their first goal at home in the league.

Although Burnley have secured four home draws, three of these were 0-0. So in four matches at Turf Moor they have only conceded one goal.

SIDELINES By John Gregory

not a bad defensive record and one we will have to break if we are to collect all three points.

When we played Burnley at Turf Moor early last season Miquel Desouza scored in only 45 seconds. Unfortunately we then lost 2-1.

However the lads more than made up for this with a 5-0 thrashing of Adrian Heath's side on that magical night last April, when we were 4-0 up by half time and the Wycombe Wanderers supporters gave the players a well-earned standing ovation.

One must not underestimate the

fantastic support that the Burnley fans give their club with over 10,000 turning up at Turf Moor on a regular basis.

In fact the Burnley v Preston North End match, which myself and Richard Hill were at, boasted the highest attendance to date in Division Two this season.

Our trip to Turf Moor showed us that we will have to be well prepared to ensure we come away with a result.

A point would be pleasing, but three points would be fantastic.

Next weekend we travel to the Priestfield Stadium in Gillingham, for another potentially awkward away match.

After picking up a vital point at Brentford we need to pick up as many away points as possible before our crucial two home matches against Bristol Rovers on Saturday, October 18 and Walsall only three days later.

As always support at home and away is much appreciated by Richard and myself, and I know it makes a difference to the players.

Hopefully the travelling Blue Army will be able to make themselves heard at Turf Moor tomorrow, as I'm sure Burnley will want revenge for the thrashing we handed out to them on April 15 at Adams Park.

Do keep cheering, we need your support.

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Pictures for this edition of The Blues News were supplied by the Bucks Free Press.

The Blues News is the official newspaper of Wycombe Wanderers. It is produced in association with the Bucks Free Press.

Any correspondence should be sent to the Editor, The Blues News, Wycombe Wanderers Football Club, Hillbottom Road, Sands, High Wycombe. Telephone (0494) 472100. Fax (0494) 527833.

Blues on the screen

IF you want to see Wanderers on the screen as well as the pitch, why not invest in an official Wycombe Wanderers screen saver.

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It's tough for us – on and off the pitch

IT is fair to say that Wycombe Wanderers FC Ltd is finding life tough in Division Two, both on the field and financially.

We managed to make a trading profit during our last years in the GM Vauxhall Conference and during our first year in the Football League in Division Three.

However, we have yet to show a profit in our first three years in Division Two.

The members of the club will soon receive a set of accounts which show a loss of around £386,000 for the year ending in May 1997.

This figure is struck after taking into account net spending of £450,000 on transfer fees in a bid to stay in Division Two.

The loss would have been greater had it not been for the splendid support and generosity given by many of our sponsors who assisted the fight against relegation.

Survival in the Football League in the current climate of change is difficult. Looking at the latest analysis by Deloitte & Touch of the finances of football clubs, the outlook is gloomy.

Their figures for the season 1995/96 show that four clubs in Division Two managed to show a profit before player transfers are taken into account.

After transfers are included, profits were shown by nine clubs.

However, Premier League clubs are more eager to take players on free transfers from overseas than to pay substantial sums to lower division clubs, so this avenue of gaining additional revenue is not currently very productive.

The same information from Deloitte also shows that the Wanderers had the second highest net asset value in Division Two and only seven Division One clubs showed a higher net asset value.

Last season the turnover for the club increased by a massive 40 per cent to £3.2m, which was largely the result of

LETTER TO A SUPPORTER
Financial report
(season 1996/97)
By Graham Peart

increased levels in sponsorship.

In contrast match receipts received via the turnstiles increased 17 per cent which is a slight disappointment as the income, at a record £874,000 is only marginally higher than in our year in Division Three in 1993/94.

That year did include a Wembley play-off final appearance though.

Player wages again increased 22 per cent reflecting on the explosion in Premier League payouts which has trickled down into the lower divisions. Herein lies the root of the problem.

For the third consecutive year the playing staff wage bill has exceeded gate receipts by a substantial amount.

The last year the gate receipts covered the players wage bill was in 1993/94 in Division Three, the last year the club showed an operating profit.

There are many high points in analysing the club's position. Borrowings are modest, the stadium is in good shape and the new playing management team is working well.

The club has invested large sums of money into the development of young professional footballers, the benefits of which can be seen now with two first year professionals making regular appearances in the first team.

Costs are being controlled tightly and if support continues to increase at the same rate as last season we will be seeing crowds close to the size of those who thronged to Adams Park in our first year in Division Two.

The club can then return to profitability and can go forward once again. Without an increase in support it will not be possible to maintain our efforts to be a serious promotion prospect.

"The loss would have been greater had it not been for the splendid support and generosity given by many of our sponsors"



Big bill: Player costs are the most expensive item for Blues

Putting paid to rumours

RUMOURS have been circulating that WWFC charge a £1 surcharge on matchdays.

This is not the case. If anybody is in any doubt please refer to WWFC's season ticket application forms, which were distributed by the club to over 12,000 people during May.

The matchday prices on the day are clearly stated, as is the fact that there is no discount on matchdays.

Wycombe's fixture list highlights the discounted prices, which may have caused a little confusion. The club would like to make it clear that any supporter, home, neutral or away who buys any ticket for any match at Adams Park before the day receives a £1 per ticket advance booking discount.

One suggestion from the Official Supporters Club was that the club introduce a voucher if its computer system ever goes down again, so supporters who try to buy tickets prior to matchdays do not miss out on discounts.

The club believes it provides an excellent service to those wishing to purchase tickets in advance.

Tickets for all scheduled matches can be purchased from Wanderers in Town, the Commercial Offices or by post. Tickets for the whole season can be purchased during one visit, one phonecall or by one letter.

There is no surcharge for any supporters paying by cheque, cash or WWFC Visa Card on the Creditcard Hotline (01494) 441118 or by credit card in person at Wanderers in Town and the Commercial Offices.

WWFC also accept credit card cheques by post without charging any booking fee.

The club prefers all fans to buy tickets in advance at the discounted prices, as this reduces the queues on matchdays and is more financially beneficial to home and away supporters.

On a separate note, the club has received suggestions from fans who are members of both supporters clubs who sit in Blocks K and T in the ServisPak Stand saying it should not be £2 cheaper for adults and £1 cheaper for senior citizens than the seats for away fans in the Roger Vere Stand. The prices for children and students are the same.

Obviously if home (adult and OAP) fans using Blocks K and T want to pay the same as away supporters the club has no objection, but at present it has no intention of changing its pricing structure.

October – the month that separates the best from the rest

OCTOBER is the month when players, managers and chairmen look closely at the club's position in the table.

At the end of the month 14 games would have been completed and a pattern starts to emerge of how the team is likely to fare during the rest of the season.

Those teams in the top half and bottom half at the end of October usually collect the promotion and relegation places. So we look forward to another five tough matches with the hope of plundering points along the way.

Our first match is at Turf Moor Burnley tomorrow. The job of managing a football club has come as a bit of a culture shock to Chris

ALAN HUTCHINSON
prepares the month ahead

Waddle. He is currently looking to re-build his team putting first teamers on the transfer list.

The natives are restless in East Lancashire, they have a strong tradition and glorious history and expect better results. As these notes are penned, Burnley are still looking for their first point of the season and remain at the bottom of the pile.

The following Saturday, October 11 we are on our travels once more to Priestfield, Gillingham. Not a happy hunting ground for us in recent times.

The Gills have made a similar start to ourselves, conceding as many goals as they have scored. No doubt they will get the ball forward quickly looking for Fortune-West and Akinbiyi to get on the end of it.

At last we play at home on Saturday, October 18 against Bristol Rovers. With all the talk about City at the start of the season it is Rovers that have surprised everyone.

They lost their unbeaten start to the season at the feet of Gillingham in mid September at the Memorial Ground. The signings of Barry Hayles (£250,000 from Stevenage) and Steve Foster (£150,000 from Woking), have brought goals and solidity.

Hayles had hit five goals in seven

games to keep Rovers in the top six at the end of September.

Three days later we face Walsall at home on Tuesday, October 21.

Memories of the last visit by Walsall are painful, a 2-0 defeat on a skating rink of a pitch on Boxing Day 1996. It did remain our last home defeat until the recent Carlisle United fiasco. One record that stretched for 13 games.

Walsall have a number of new faces this season. Manager Jan Sorenson was appointed at the end of May and made immediate changes. Their most exciting signing is Frenchman Roger Boli, who scored a hat-trick after just four matches.

Our last fixture for the month is

at Chesterfield. Everyone is aware of their achievements in last season's FA Cup. Reaching the semi-final has given a terrific confidence plus the finances for re-investment.

New arrivals at Saltergate this season are: Steve Wilkinson (Preston £150,000), Roger Willis (Peterborough £100,000) and Ian Breckin (Rotherham United £100,000). Now in the top three they are making a strong challenge for promotion this season.

In all a very interesting month ahead. Come 4.45pm on Saturday, October 25 we should have some indication of where Wanderers are likely to be challenging during the remainder of the season.

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THE BLUES NEWS

Thank you fans

THE 2,000 Wanderers fans who joined in the standing ovation for Watford chairman Elton John the day after he moved the nation singing *Candle in the Wind* at Princess Diana's funeral, have won glowing praise from Watford Football Club and the police.

Vicarage Road match commander Glyn Evans said: "Wycombe Wanderers fans can come back any time they want. They are welcome here. They are the best behaved supporters we have had."

"There was a lovely atmosphere and I was particularly impressed at the way they applauded Elton John as he took his seat in the directors box before the kick off."

Hornets' boss Graham Taylor wrote to Blues chairman Ivor Becks to thank them for making it an emotional occasion.



Wave of emotion: Elton John thanks Blues fans for their warm reception



KEITH SCOTT

Blues News' images from Adams Park



Team take: Supporters can get a free Blues poster from Wanderers in Town while stocks last

Snap shots

NOT all the action at Adams Park takes place in 90 minutes on a Saturday afternoon.

The club has been busy giving and receiving gifts, with a £500 cheque from the Official Supporters Club for

youth development among the gifts. The club has publicly thanked the supporters for their donation.

Meanwhile, by way of giving the fans something back, Blues have free team posters to give away.



Top man: Verco sales director Clive Rees presented Mark Stallard with the supporters player of the month award, for August, watched by Stallard's Mark Your Man sponsors Vincas Table



Excellent: Blues' youth team manager Neil Smillie receives a £500 cheque for the Centres of Excellence from Keith Blagborough of the Official Supporters Club



In the bag: Blues' Mark Austin presents Rob Holland with a golf bag for his hole-in-one at Wanderers annual golf day



Free ticket: Equity's Mark Croucher presents Julie Kerry with a free season ticket following their prize draw



Free money: Matchday draw winner Robert Hudson receives a £400 cheque from Keith Scott

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We cannot take our fans for granted

COMMERCIAL BREAK
By Mark Austin

Wanderers must earn fans support

WHEN we drew 1-1 with Brentford at Griffin Park last month, it was very noticeable that the crowd was only 3,695.

The match was screened live on Sky Sports, with hundreds of empty seats opposite the television gantry.

The Wycombe Wanderers faithful were there in force to get behind the team, leaving Brentford with a little over 2,500 of their own fans there on the night.

The Brentford directors must have expected a much larger home crowd for this local derby, particularly as Brentford were in the play-off final at Wembley at the end of the season last May.

One can only assume fans stayed away to watch it at home or in their local pub, or were put off travelling to the ground by the traffic jams caused by the Southall train crash earlier that day.

To me, this surprisingly low Brentford turnout illustrates that no board of directors should ever take the support of its club's fans for granted. Support at whatever club has to be earned by results, entertaining football, excellent facilities, offering good value for money and good customer service.

Certainly at Adams Park everyone is continually striving to improve in all these areas for the benefit of the Blue army and indeed the club.

Moving on, I'd like to tell you about one of the steadiest and most successful promotions at Adams Park - the Wycombe Wanderers Visa Card, run by MBNA International Bank Ltd.

This customer service has proved beneficial to both the club and those who apply, and has been approved by MBNA. (Obviously MBNA International Bank Ltd have their own rules and do not give everybody who applies a card). Nevertheless the number of Wycombe Wanderers Visa Card holders has steadily grown over the past two years and is still climbing.

In fact Wanderers have just signed a five year contract with MBNA to extend the WWFC Visa Card scheme until at least 2002.

The club has also signed a



Empty: The Blues match at Brentford was played out in front of empty stands and terraces

separate personal loan five year contract with MBNA, the details of which were published in the Preston North End matchday programme last Saturday.

I have personally had an MBNA Wanderers Visa Card for over two years now and find the service they provide excellent. Not only is there no annual fee, but highly competitive interest rates and additional financial benefits.

Wanderers Visa Card holders also save £1 every time they use their card to purchase matchday tickets using the creditcard hotline and save £2 on every season ticket purchased with their card.

The club is running an exclusive cheese and wine evening for all WWFC Visa Card holders on Thursday, October 30 at Wanderers in Town, by kind permission of the Octagon Centre.

Entry is for WWFC Visa Card holders only and a guest of their choice. Holders will not only get free wine and cheese when they turn up, between 5.30pm and 7pm, but they will also get 20 per cent off all merchandise, including sale items bought using their card during the one hour special event.

If you want to try to get a WWFC card in time for this promotion, call MBNA on (0800) 062062 quoting reference GT80 and ask for an application form.

All Wycombe Wanderers Visa Card holders are helping the club as 0.15 per cent of everything they spend is donated to the football club by MBNA without any cost to the cardholder.

Also, MBNA gives Wanderers £4 every time a new card is activated (i.e. by its first transaction) and £3 on each anniversary of

every active card, again without any cost whatsoever being incurred by the cardholder.

In this way Wanderers supporters who use a Blues Visa Card are genuinely benefiting the club, while themselves enjoying exclusive privileges. Not only that, every time a WWFC Visa Card is used throughout the world it shows the cardholder's support of the Blues and helps to raise the general level of awareness of the club around the globe.

As there is no annual fee supporters who already have a Visa Card can apply to have this card if they want to support the club and benefit from the extra rewards offered by both MBNA International Bank Ltd and by the club.

Don't miss out - please apply to MBNA and start supporting your club every time you get your wallet out to spend.

IN SHORT

Star dinners

THIS season's Sportsman's Dinners which are being held at Adams Park are starting to sell out fast.

The current availability at this season's forthcoming events is as follows: Mike Summerbee dinner on Thursday, November 20 - three tables left; Ian Robertson dinner on Monday, January 26 - seven tables left; Ian St John dinner on Monday, March 30 - six tables left; Wilf McGuinness dinner on Monday, May 18 - ten tables left.

Tables of ten cost £370 and tables of 12 cost £420 (£35 per head). Prices include the entertainment, a four course waitress served meal, followed by coffee and mints.

We would be delighted to have your company again at Adams Park this season.

If you are planning to attend, please book early to ensure you get the Sportsman's Dinner you want.

Stewards wanted

WYCOMBE Wanderers urgently require stewards.

The ground safety stewards will work a four hour stint between 1pm and 5pm on matchdays and will be paid £18 in total, which works out at £4.50 per hour.

The club is also looking to recruit turnstile operators to work on matchdays between 1pm and 3.30pm.

They will be paid £12, and from 3.30pm operators can watch the match in progress.

If you are interested in either position please contact the football club on (01494) 472100.

New position

FOR extra spectator convenience, Wycombe Wanderers Football Club has positioned all of its matchday programme sellers at the front gates and in the car park of Adams Park.

Any spectator wanting to purchase a matchday programme can do so from one of these programme sellers before entering the stadium.

Any unsold programmes will then be sold around the ground during half time.

Free team poster

WANDERERS are offering their official 1997/98 squad poster free of charge to any Blues supporters who call into either the Commercial Offices at Adams Park or Wanderers In Town in the Octagon Shopping Centre (while stocks last).

The Wycombe Wanderers official colour team poster is limited to four copies per household.

Ladies need you

WANDERERS Ladies Football Club is looking for new players. No previous experience is necessary and players of any age are welcome.

Anyone interested should contact Paula on (01494) 445927.

Taylor's test

MARTIN Taylor's testimonial brochure is now available from Wanderers in Town, priced £3.50.

Become a Blues ballboy and see the games free

OFFICIAL pitch sponsors The Jenkins Newman Partnership need ballboys.

The club is inviting applications from anyone wanting to be a Wycombe Wanderers ballboy at Adams Park.

Ballboys will be kitted out in the Jenkins Newman Partnership sweatshirts and will help remove the PVC goal banners before kick-off and the Jenkins Newman centre circle PVC pitch banner, bringing it back out at half-time.

Applicants must be between nine and 15-years-old, strong and available for all first team League and cup matches. Ballboys get free entry into all matches at Adams Park.

The club is also looking for two adults to supervise the ballboys and put the three banners away at the end of the match. The adults will receive car passes and free entry to matches at Adams Park. For more information call Tim Arnold on (01494) 472100.

Work for Blues and get cash and a season ticket

THE Blues Development Fund requires door to door lottery agents to cover established rounds.

Vacancies exist for sellers in the following areas: Loudwater, Downley, Holmer Farm, Stokenchurch and Booker, Micklefield, Cresswell and Toteridge.

Agents will receive the following benefits: commission, bonuses and a free season ticket to all Wycombe Wanderers home Nationwide League matches (subject to certain

conditions).

For more information and to apply to become a lottery agent telephone Wycombe Wanderers promotions manager Mike Phillips at the club on (01494) 472100.

After prize money and expenses have been deducted from the account, the Blues Development Fund donates its profits to Wycombe Wanderers Football Club for ground improvements at Adams Park.



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It all goes on while you sing the Blues

LAST month I told you about the commercial office build up to matches.

I spoke about the importance of obtaining a reasonable estimate of the numbers of supporters attending, the casual staff, without whom we could not run matches, and the administrative tasks which have to be completed before kick-off.

I closed the article at the stage where all matchday staff were in position, the crowd was flowing into the ground and we were all hoping for the right result.

After kick-off the main area of activity moves to the Matchday Administration office. Programme sellers account for the number of programmes they were issued with, either by cash or unsold programmes. Turnstile operators bring in their cash and tickets, and balance their returns to the gate counting computer. Ticket office staff agree their cash to their computer shift tickets when they close their selling positions.

The cash is checked in the Matchday Administration office and prepared for collection by the security company before the final whistle. The actual number of spectators in the stadium is agreed with the Control Room and officially declared.

Programme sales and the unsold balance is agreed by the programme supervisor and the commission of the sellers calculated. It is vital to the profitability of WWFC that we order sufficient programmes to satisfy demand without being left with too many unsold at the end of a match. We try to

By Charles Colton

achieve the right balance.

The ticketing system is updated for any unsold tickets which were printed for sale at the turnstiles, thus showing the actual ticket sales income for the match.

Reports are run and we go home with the same passion regarding the match as any other fan since most of us are true supporters of WWFC. Most of the actual paper work and tidying up takes place a few days after the match, when the Football League return is prepared. The number of spectators is verified against the mechanical counters on the turnstiles which act as a check on the computer.

Any material differences are investigated with corrective action being taken as required. The match gate receipts are carefully checked and form the basis of the League return, together with various costs which are charged against the income before the League takes its share. The wages of the 200 or so matchday staff are calculated in preparation for the monthly payroll run.

We look at the average spend in tea bars, the ratio of programme sales to spectators, the number of season ticket holders who did not attend, the actual gate compared with our forecast and numerous other matters. Any complaints from spectators are looked into and responded to and problems which arose on the day are addressed with a view to avoiding them in future. By now we will have moved onto the next match and the whole routine starts again.



Goal machine: Leading scorer Mark Stallard's away shirt is up for grabs

Leading scorer could be yours

LEADING scorer Mark Stallard's away shirt is still unmarked in the club's Mark Your Man sponsorship scheme. Dave Carroll (away) is also available in his testimonial year. The cost of the package is £200 + vat and includes various benefits culminating in a presentation by your sponsored player of his shirt which will be signed and framed. To Mark Your Man call Tim Arnold on (01494) 472100. Mark Your Man Sponsors - 1997/98 Season are: John Gregory H and A; James, Harry & Victoria; Richard Hill H and A Francis Glenister Salomon Brothers In. Ltd 0171 721 3891; Neil Smilie H and A The Blues Supporters Club 01494 563697; Dave Jones not sponsored; Martin Taylor H George and Matthew Mackenzie, A Coach No.1, The Blues Supporters Club; Brian Parkin not sponsored; Paul McCarthy H and A Denzil, Margaret & Andrew Ashcroft; Michael Forsyth H and A Bucks Auto Components; Jason Kavanagh H

Bill and Sheila at The Disraeli Arms (01494) 526760, A available; Jason Cousins H The Royal Oak, Great Kinghill (01494) 711199, A Christine Bye; Steve Brown H Paul and Alan Gillott; A Ann Cohen & Co. Solicitors (01494) 677420; Dave Carroll H Elaine Blake, A available; Keith Ryan H and A Link Precision Services 01844 347062; John Cornforth H and A Quality heating Services Ltd 01494538488; Michael Simpson not sponsored; Steve McGavin H Sharon Healey, A Selina Perrin; Mark Stallard (H) Vince's Table, A available; Paul Read H and A Graphic Arts Supplies Ltd; Arron Patton not sponsored; Alan Beaton H Sharon & Gary Trimby A available; Maurice Harkin H Wycombe Wanderers Independent Supporters Club, A available; Lewis Craker H Frances Carvell, A available; Gary Wright not sponsored; Keith Scott H Catherine Worboys, A Alan, Michael and Richard.

Fun for all

KIDS CORNER
By Dave Evans

LET me start by thanking everybody for the help and support they have given Nas and I towards the community scheme, emphasising how important the scheme is to the club's future.

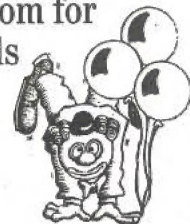
Half-term is coming up, and we will be running soccer fun weeks at these venues: Holy Trinity School - Marlow, Cressex School - Wycombe, St Edmund Campion - Maidenhead. Dates: Monday, October 27 to Friday, October 31.

All children on the fun weeks will receive a fun-pack containing a gift, first team complimentary tickets, five per cent discount card for clubshop and a season ticket for youth and reserve games.

Nas and I have structured the community scheme so we are able to give children aged from five to 16 an opportunity to receive regular professional coaching. We have been liaising with first and middle school teachers offering them the chance for us to come into their schools and teach.

We are also setting up after-school venues offering additional football coaching to boys and girls, enabling us to monitor and keep hold of the local talent, rather than going to another team.

Room for kids



BASSETTSBURY Balloons Party Shop in Desborough Road, Wycombe is the official sponsor of the Toddlin' Wanderers creche which is open every Saturday matchday from 2.30pm to 5pm for youngsters aged two-and-half to eight. Telephone Tim on (01494) 472100 to book a place at the creche which was recommended on BBC TV's Really Useful Show.

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Not only will you be showing your support, you really will be giving it too. For every accepted cardholder, MBNA International, the bank that issues the card on our behalf, will pay us a royalty. Then every time you make purchases with your card, a small percentage of the total transaction value goes to our funds. You'll be an official Wycombe Wanderers F.C. sponsor - at no extra cost to you!

Which would you prefer to carry: a card that supports only the bank that issues it... or one that gives valuable financial assistance to your favourite football club?

Over 600 Wycombe Wanderers supporters have already switched to the Wycombe Wanderers Visa Card. If you want to benefit yourself and the club, call today without delay.

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